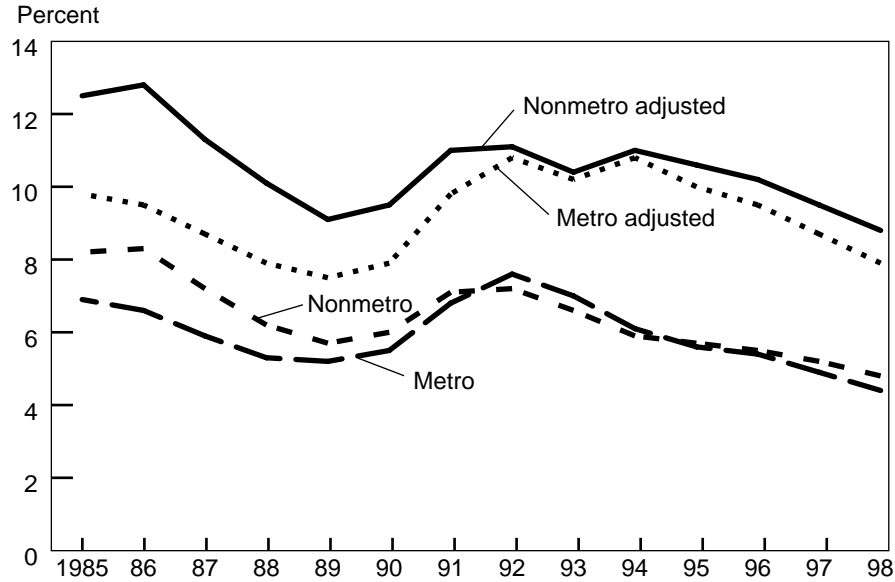


Figure 4-1.

Unemployment rates by residence, 1985-98



Note: Beginning in the first quarter of 1994, the adjusted unemployment rate is defined as the total unemployed, plus all marginally attached workers, plus total employed part time for economic reasons, as a percent of the civilian labor force, plus all marginally attached workers (U-6). Prior to the first quarter of 1994, the adjusted unemployment rate is defined as total unemployed, plus discouraged workers, plus one-half of workers part time for economic reasons as a percent of the civilian labor force, plus all discouraged workers. Source: Current Population Survey, Bureau of the Census.

## ■ Nonmetropolitan Income and Poverty

Nonmetropolitan median household income increased by 4.6 percent from 1996 to 1997 after adjustment for inflation, going from \$28,734 to \$30,057. The median income of metropolitan households increased 2.3 percent, from \$38,504 to \$39,381. With nonmetro income growing more than metro income, the income gap between nonmetro and metro households narrowed slightly. Nonmetro household income lagged metro household income by 23.7 percent in 1997, down from a 25.4 percent gap in 1996. In both nonmetro and metro areas, married-couple families have much higher median income than do other household types, and non-Hispanic White households have much higher median income than households headed by minorities (table 4-5).

The poverty rate in nonmetro America stood at 15.9 percent in 1997, unchanged from the previous year, and higher than the metro poverty rate of 12.6 percent. The nonmetro poverty rate has been quite stable over the last 10 years, remaining within a

range of 1.7 percentage points (figure 4-2). The nonmetro-metro poverty gap, at 3.3 percentage points, widened for the third consecutive year. The combination of increasing household income with a stagnant poverty rate suggests that nonmetro income growth is more commonly occurring among higher than lower income families.

Nonmetro poverty rates continued to be higher than metro poverty rates across demographic groups (figure 4-3). People living in families headed by women experienced the highest poverty rates of all family types (41.2 percent in nonmetro areas and 34.5 percent in metro), and a high proportion of nonmetro women not living with relatives were also poor (31 percent). Over one-fifth of nonmetro children lived in poor families.

The poverty rates among nonmetro minorities were much higher than those of nonmetro Whites and substantially higher than those of metro minorities. The poverty rate was highest for nonmetro Blacks (31.9 percent), followed by nonmetro Native Americans (31.6 percent) and nonmetro Hispanics (30.7 percent). Despite the higher incidence of poverty among nonmetro minorities, two-thirds of the nonmetro poor were non-Hispanic Whites because of the large White majority in the nonmetro population. However, the Hispanic share of the nonmetro poor has nearly doubled in recent years, growing from 5.8 percent in 1986 to 10.4 percent in 1997.

Table 4-5.

Median household income by family type and race/ethnicity			
	<i>Nonmetro</i>	<i>Metro</i>	<i>Nonmetro-Metro gap<sup>1</sup></i>
	<i>Dollars</i>		<i>Percent</i>
Total	30,057	39,381	23.7
By household type:			
Married-couple family	41,060	55,533	26.1
Female-headed family	18,580	24,304	23.6
Unrelated women <sup>2</sup>	13,310	19,062	30.2
Unrelated men <sup>2</sup>	21,446	30,022	28.6
By race/ethnicity of householder:			
White, non-Hispanic	31,546	43,868	28.1
Black	19,987	25,804	22.5
Hispanic	22,538	27,077	16.8
Native American <sup>3</sup>	21,124	33,653	37.2

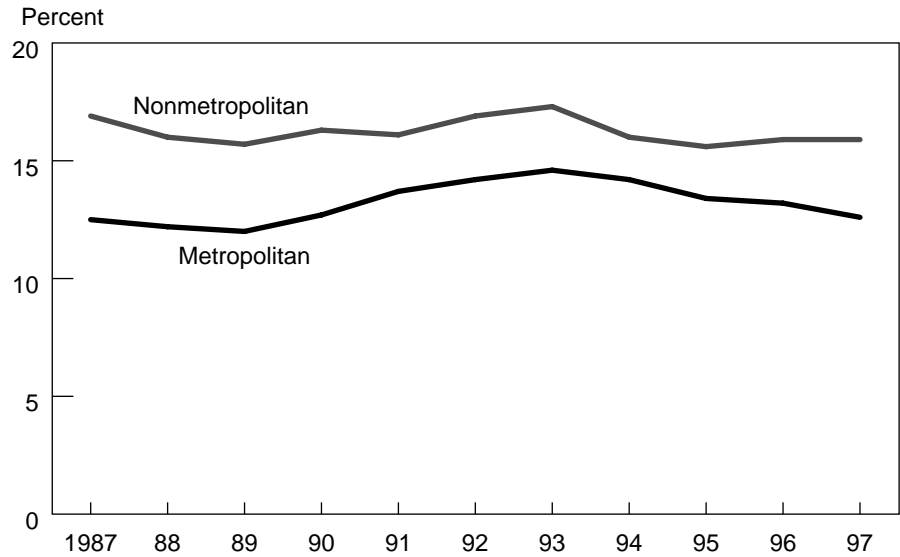
<sup>1</sup>Percent by which nonmetro income is lower than metro.

<sup>2</sup>Persons who live alone or with nonrelatives.

<sup>3</sup>The sample of Native Americans is very small, making estimates of their household income subject to high variability.

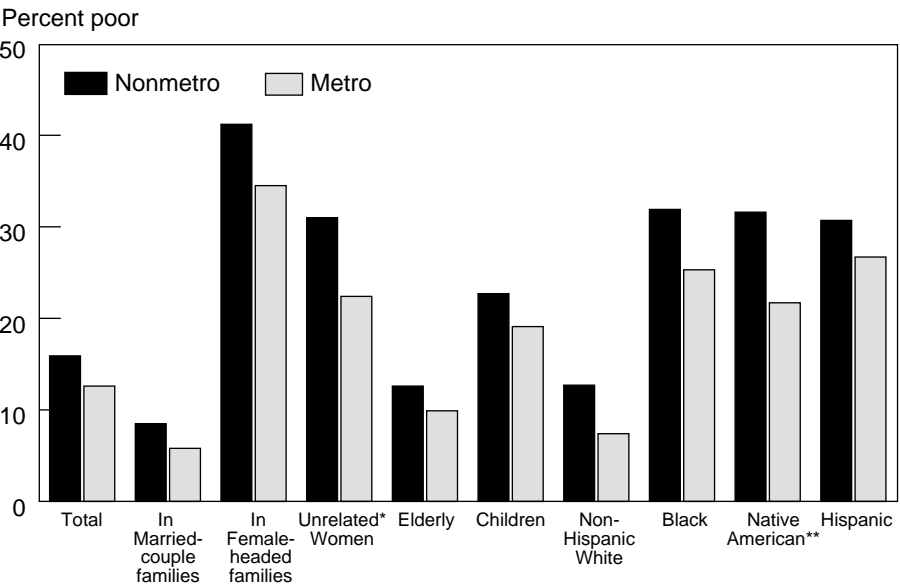
Source: Prepared by ERS using data from the March 1998 Current Population Survey.

Figure 4-2.  
Poverty rate by residence, 1987-97



Source: Prepared by ERS using data from the Bureau of the Census' Consumer Income P-60 series.

Figure 4-3.  
Poverty rates by population group, 1997



\*Women living alone or with nonrelatives.

\*\*The sample of Native Americans is very small, making estimates of their poverty status subject to high variability.

Source: Prepared by ERS using data from the March 1998 Current Population Survey.